

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 A method of operating a marketing scheme comprising the steps of:
 - (a) registering a first party with the marketing scheme operator;
 - (b) issuing a respondable transmissible element to said first party for onward transmission to a plurality of receiving parties, said method of onward transmission being selected from the group consisting of direct transmission by said first party and indirect transmission by a receiving party who has received the transmissible element from one of said first and receiving parties;
 - (c) receiving a response to said transmissible element from a second party who is one of said plurality of receiving parties;
 - (d) accumulating the number of responses received from said plurality of receiving parties;
 - (e) comparing said accumulated number of responses with a target total; and
 - (f) delivering a first prize to said second party when said accumulated number of received responses equals the target total.
2. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 1 wherein a second prize is also delivered to a third party from whom said second party received said transmissible element.
3. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 1 wherein said second party is offered a transmissible element when said accumulated number of received responses is less than said target total.
4. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 2 wherein said target total is established in accordance with the value and number of said first and second prizes.

5. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 1 wherein a fourth party is registered with said marketing scheme operator prior to the commencement of said marketing scheme.
6. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 5 wherein said fourth party donates at least one prize.
7. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 5 wherein said fourth party determines said target total.
8. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 5 wherein said first party is shown said prizes donated by said fourth party.
9. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 8 wherein said first party is permitted to select a prize.
10. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 8 wherein said first party is permitted to register to acquire said transmissible element.
11. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 5 wherein a registration form is customised to meet the requirements of said fourth party.
12. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 11 wherein said first party must complete said registration form before a transmissible element is issued thereto.
13. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 12 wherein said transmissible element is sent to said first party in an email further including instructions on how said transmissible element should be transmitted to further parties.

14. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 13 wherein said first party must transmit said transmissible element to a receiving party in order to win a prize.

15. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 1 whereupon receipt of said transmissible element, said receiving party is advised of their chance to win said prize and is invited to respond to said transmissible element.

16. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 15 whereupon responding to said transmissible element, said receiving party and said first party become said second party and third party respectively to the subsequent proceedings.

17. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 5 wherein when said second party does not win said first prize, said second party is required to provide information in accordance with the requirements of said fourth party in order to obtain a transmissible element.

18. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 17 whereupon receipt of said transmissible element said second party is advised on how to transmit said transmissible element to other parties.

19. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 17 wherein said second party must transmit said transmissible element to a receiving party in order to win a second prize.

20. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 19 wherein when said receiving party responds to said transmissible element, said second party and said receiving party become said third party and said second party respectively to the subsequent proceedings.

21. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 20 wherein when said accumulated number of received responses matches said target total, said second party is requested to transmit information to a recording centre and to provide a copy of said transmissible element thereto to enable said recording centre to verify that said second party's email address is not identical of that of said third party.

22. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 1 wherein when said first prize is won, registrants for said first prize are informed of the fact with a request that no further transmission are made in respect of said first prize and no further registrations therefor are accepted.

23. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 10 wherein said registration of said first party is added to said accumulated number of received responses and when said first prize is delivered to said first party without the delivery of a second prize to said second party, the at least one remaining prize is used in a periodic random draw amongst all the registered parties.

24. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 1 wherein said transmissible element is selected from the group consisting of HTML and textual messages.

25. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 24 wherein said transmissible element further comprises instructions as to how it should be used to win a prize.

26. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 24 wherein said transmissible element comprises responding means chosen from the group consisting of a hyperlink and an email address to a recording centre.

27. The method of operating the marketing scheme according to Claim 24 wherein a fourth party is registered with said marketing scheme operator prior to the commencement of said marketing scheme and said transmissible element is customised in accordance with the requirements of said fourth party.

28. A system for implementing a marketing scheme comprising of a scheme database containing details of available marketing schemes and the at least one operators of said marketing schemes; a prize offer database containing details of prizes made available by the at least one marketing scheme operators; an advertisement database containing advertisements; and a response database containing details of respondents to said marketing scheme, wherein these databases are accessible by a user software module and a logic software module so that said prizes in said prize offer database are displayed by said user software module, details of registrants for said marketing scheme acquired by said user software module are stored in said response database and a generation of transmissible elements comprising of advertisements from said advertisement database, a transmission of transmissible elements to persons whose details are stored in said response database, a storage of responses to said transmissible elements in said response database and a decision process for prize grant are collectively controlled by said logic software unit.

29. A system for implementing a marketing scheme according to Claim 28 wherein said system further comprises an administration module and an advertiser administration module, wherein said administration module enables suitably empowered parties to add marketing scheme operators, campaign details and marketing schemes to said scheme database and to generate reports of marketing scheme statistics and wherein said advertiser administration module enables suitably empowered marketing scheme operators to generate their own reports of statistics relating to their own marketing schemes and further add information relating to their marketing schemes to said scheme database.